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OF ÆSCHYLUS



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THE PROMETHEUS BOUND OF ÆSCHYLUS

TRANSLATED
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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INTRODUCTION

I

ORIGIN OF GREEK TRAGEDY

ONE of the peculiar features of Greek literature is its regular and harmonious development. First comes the rise of the epic; when this form has been thoroughly worked over, lyric poetry expands and becomes predominant; out of the lyric grows the drama; and last of all comes the splendid harvest of prose. Yet in one sense the lyric is in Greece, as elsewhere, the mother of all poetical forms. The epos is but a development and interknitting of the old songs of the minstrels celebrating the deeds of heroes and ancestors; the drama grew directly from the chants, now passionate and now ribald, sung in honor of Dionysus. And in both cases the genius of a single man was so predominant as to establish once and forever the model which all were to follow. What Homer did for epic, Aeschylus accomplished for tragic poetry.

This lyric origin of tragedy, together with its

persistent religious character, must always be held in mind. Unfortunately we know less about the dithyramb, from which tragedy sprang, than almost any other form of Greek lyric poetry. Even the meaning of the name is involved in complete obscurity. It arose apparently from the wild singing and dancing at the season of harvesting the grapes. Dionysus, or Bacchus, to whom the revellers naturally addressed their praises, lent his double character to the occasion. He was the god of riotous joy; he was also the leader of the enthusiasts who found in intoxication a symbol of their spiritual frenzy when seized by the indwelling deity, and in this capacity, under the name of Iacchus, he was associated with the mystic rites of the Great Goddesses at Eleusis. From the graver side of the revels tragedy was born, from the riot and noise and scoffing were developed the satyr drama and comedy.

One name must be mentioned in connection with the growth of the dithyramb itself, — Arion, a half-fabulous poet the story of whose rescue on a dolphin is so graphically recounted by Herodotus. In some way Arion changed the rude dithyrambic revel into a regular literary production. Did he reduce the number of the

chorus to fifty and institute a prescribed circular dance? did he disguise the revellers as satyrs, *tragoi*, whence the name tragic chorus? Did he introduce set dialogue into the chant? It is impossible to say; but whatever his achievement, the innovation was so important that he was styled the creator of the dithyramb, and is reckoned a true herald of Aeschylus.

To Thespis, however, is due the change which made tragedy something distinct from its dithyrambic source. The verses of Horace are often quoted: "Thespis is said to have discovered the unknown form of the tragic muse and to have carried about in carts his poems, which they sung and acted with faces smeared with wine-lees." This hardly sounds promising for the creator of a great art, but then his position was not so very unlike the young Molière's.

Thespis was born in the village of Icaria, near Marathon, where the worship of Dionysus was especially prominent. After some experience in leading the Dionysiac revels in the country towns he came up to Athens, some time about the year 560 B. C., and began to exhibit his minstrelsy in the market-place. We may suppose that his innovations were gradual. The all-important step was taken when he set apart one

person as an actor, who should appear at different intervals during the choral song, and by rehearsing or reporting some event give a sense of reality to the emotions of the dancers. With more experience no doubt he wove these speeches and songs into a closer plot, made the dialogue between actor and chorus more dramatic, and departed further and further from the traditional orgiastic subject for his theme. It is interesting to hear from Plutarch the tradition that Solon, then full of years, being fond of novelties, went to see Thespis acting one of his dramas. The old man apparently disapproved of the mimetic art, which seemed to him something like too irreverent a tampering with the truth. Plato two centuries later still held very grave doubts in regard to the stage, for he too thought that a man could not well play the serious part of life and be an imitator of other parts at the same time. The very words of the philosopher might have been spoken by the ancient lawgiver; and they are besides a curious example of Plato's distrust of art in general. Jowett has paraphrased them with his usual vigor: "And when one of these polyphonous pantomimic gentlemen offers to exhibit himself and his poetry, we will fall down and worship him as a sweet

creature, and a holy and wonderful being; he shall be anointed with myrrh and have a garland of wool set upon his head — but then we shall bid him turn about and go to the next city, for we are patrons of the rough honest poet, and will not depart from the primitive model.”

The most important date for the drama in these early years is 535, or thereabout, when Peisistratus established dramatic contests. Rivals of Thespis had already arisen, and henceforth the excitement of contest for a prize was added to the legitimate interest of the spectacle. Several names, unfortunately little more than names to us, bridge over the gap between Thespis and Aeschylus. One of these, Phrynichus, the son of Polyphradmon, may be recorded here for the praise bestowed by Aristophanes on his sweet lyric vein, and for an anecdote related of him by Herodotus. In 495 B. C. the city of Miletus was taken by the Persians and pitilessly sacked. The emotion aroused by this disaster in Greece, and particularly in Athens, was profound; and when Phrynichus represented the capture of the city in a drama the Athenian audience, we are told, “burst into tears, and fined the poet a thousand drachmas for reminding them of their own misfortune, decreeing that no one here-

after should ever produce the play." It is a memorable instance of popular sympathy; but is evidence also, I think, of the distaste felt by the Greeks for any drama which appealed too strongly to the emotion of relaxing pity. Tragedy was to be, in these early days at least, sublime and exalting, but not lacrymose. It was to purge the emotions, and not harass them. At another time Phrynichus, as well as Aeschylus, made the battle of Salamis the theme of a tragedy, and here the play, brought out at the expense of Themistocles, himself the hero of that victory, won the first prize for its author.

The date of Salamis brings us well into the age of Aeschylus; but before turning to this second creator of tragedy, a word in respect to certain moral ideas involved in the new literary growth.

II

MORAL ASPECT OF GREEK TRAGEDY

GREEK literature is preëminently ethical throughout: from Homer to Aristotle its great works are more permeated with moral ideas and with reflections on human conduct and fortune than those perhaps of any other language. Yet in tragedy we feel at once that we have been brought into a new and in some respects higher moral atmosphere. In Homer and the later narrative writers there is withal a certain calmness of judgment, a lack of spiritual fervor giving to these authors a peculiar sanity of tone which is, it may be, when all detractions have been made, the surest mode of reaching the universal human heart. The lyric poets for the most part display the same classic quality; but were the works of these writers more fully preserved, especially the dithyrambic bards, we should probably find in a few of them that religious passion and exaltation, separated from purely moral ideas, which mark so much of Oriental literature as to

be properly called Oriental without qualification. Now the union of this religious passion with the more judicial and more distinctly Greek ethical reflection has given us the rare spirit of Athenian tragedy. There is, with the exception of Plato and Lucretius, nothing else of the sort in classic literature, and, if we examine the matter, surprisingly little of the sort in the libraries of the world. It is not common even in the bibles of the race, and I believe cannot be found, except sporadically perhaps, in any dramatic literature outside of Greece. The Spanish drama approaches it most nearly ; but even there mediæval notions of honor have taken the place of rational morality, and something fantastic in their religious ideas places Calderon and his contemporaries in this respect, also, below the Greek theatre. The romantic charm of the Spanish drama depends on a lyric strain of quite a different kind.

This new character in the drama was the result of several causes. Emerson has somewhere said that Plato had the excellence of Europe and Asia in his brain. The saying might properly be extended to the whole race, for it was the peculiar mission of Greece to separate Europe physically and mentally from the absorbing

forces of the Orient and at the same time to be the medium of intellectual communication between the two. In general the part of Greek art and literature that has been preserved shows so strongly the qualities which we distinguish as Occidental, is so predominated by form, proportion, precision, sobriety, individual energy, rationalism, — that we are apt to overlook the strong undercurrent of Oriental mysticism and extravagance that tintured the popular mind. Now for some reason not easy to explain there was a great upheaval and rising to the surface of these Eastern traits throughout the sixth century before Christ, when tragedy was forming. The Bacchic revels are more widely diffused; the mysteries gain ever greater influence; Orphic brotherhoods spring up, whose members wear white robes, assume vows of abstinence, and have strange charms to deliver the soul from its burden of guilt; long mystical poems are written, full of wild theories of the gods and the world; mountebanks, soothsayers, diviners of all sorts, go about from city to city selling magic formulae that will heal disease and propitiate angry deities. Through it all runs the worship of Dionysus, the youngest of the gods according to Herodotus, — a worship that seems to contra-

vene in its morbid inspiration all that we hold most distinctly Greek. Yet this enthusiasm, when added to the culture and genius and self-restraint of the trained Athenian writers, was the source of a new and marvellous creation.

To the influence of this religious zeal must be added the patriotic exaltation which came with the Persian war. The little handful of free citizens suddenly found themselves called upon to face the invading torrent of the despotic East. From the conflict Athens in particular came out with glory, for she had endured the most, and to her were due the greatest victories. With this feeling of expanding physical power, came, as usually happens, a corresponding expansion of inner spirit and creative power.

In the very fulness of time the man was born without whom Greek tragedy might have continued to develop, but certainly would have been something quite different from what we now possess. Aeschylus added so much to tragedy, both formally and substantially, that he may be called its second creator. He developed the plot, established the costumes, added greater scenic effect, and above all made use of a second actor. With this last change the action of the plot could to a certain extent be carried out on

the stage instead of being merely recited. The only essential advance after this was when Sophocles added a third actor, and so made room for still greater complication and interaction of parts.

III

LIFE OF AESCHYLUS

AESCHYLUS, the son of Euphorion, was born at Eleusis in the year 525 B. C. Modern philosophers, who look to environment for the explanation of a man's character, would find in the birthplace of the tragedian much to throw light on his temperament ; and indeed the coincidence was not overlooked by the ancients. Aristophanes, in the *Frogs* (v. 886), puts this prayer into the mouth of Aeschylus : " O Demeter who didst nourish my mind, may I prove worthy of thy mysteries ; " and never was a prayer more fully answered. At Eleusis, where Demeter had found repose in the search for her daughter, were celebrated the most sacred and imposing of the Greek mysteries. Every year in the autumn, when the passing of summer foretold the winter death to come, the initiated of the Athenians purified themselves by bathing in the sea, offered expiatory sacrifices, and then in procession, now with solemn song and now with

mocking jests, marched by the Sacred Way to Eleusis, carrying the image of Iacchus, the divine mediator ; and there, chiefly in the secret hours of the night, the mystic drama and other ceremonies were performed which may have taught in symbolic manner the resurrection and judgment of the dead. Something of the solemnity and prophetic awe of these scenes no doubt entered into the inspiration of the young Eleusinian. At least he was accused in later years of divulging the mysteries in his plays, and it is probable that the gorgeous robes he adopted for his actors, and which became the conventional stage costume, were an imitation of the garments of the Eleusinian hierophants.

Aeschylus belonged to the aristocracy and bore his part in the terrible struggles of the times. He himself was present at the battles of Marathon and Salamis and Plataea. At Marathon he was wounded, and his brother was that Cynaegirus who clung to one of the retreating Persian ships until his hand was severed with an axe. The deeds of the two brothers, we are told, were commemorated in the picture of the battle set up in the Porch at Athens. These scenes of courage and patriotism exercised as strong an influence on the genius of the poet,

no doubt, as did the religious surroundings of Eleusis. The rout of the barbarians at Salamis he made the theme of the *Persians*, one of the very few historic tragedies attempted by Greek writers, and the only one that has come down to us. The famous speech in which the messenger relates the story of the fatal battle in the straits is one of the most striking epic scenes in the language, and is besides true history. In some respects no better play than the *Persians* could be selected to set forth the aim of Greek tragedy. We have here a most impressive picture of the littleness of man in conflict with the powers of destiny, and a most memorable illustration of the moral *Know thyself* and *Think as a mortal*. The play is little more than a long lamentation for the Great King, who has gone forth with overweening confidence in his might to trample under foot an insignificant city, and who now returns defeated, humiliated, reft of his glorious trappings, the sport and laughter of an ironical fate. And when Darius, who formerly among the living enjoyed more than the ordinary prosperity of man and is now equally mighty among the dead, hears from the tomb the summons of the queen, he can only say to her: "Human ills must perforce chance

to mortals, for many ills from the sea and many from the land come upon men in the stretching out of a long life.”

But the *Persians* is not the only play in which we hear the clash of arms. In that extraordinary scene of the *Frogs*, where Dionysus, disguised in the trappings of Heracles, having gone down to Hades to fetch back to earth some worthy tragic writer, instigates a debate between Aeschylus and Euripides, the elder poet is made to point to the martial character of his dramas as their chief glory. The exact words of Aristophanes may be quoted as showing also the high estimation in which Aeschylus was held and the strictly moral grounds on which a poet was judged : —

Aeschylus. For what should we admire a poet ?

Euripides. For his cleverness and good advice, and because we make men better in the cities.

Aes. Suppose you have n't done this, but from good and noble have made them more villainous,—what pains do you think you ought to suffer ?

Dionysus. Death ; you need n't ask that.

Aes. See now what sort of men you received from my hands, how noble they were, great fellows six feet high, no shirkers of duty, market gossipers, swindlers, and general rascals like the race of to-day, but men who breathed of the spear and the lance and white-crested helmets and casques and greaves, and courage doughty as the sevenfold shield of Ajax.

Eur. Worse and more of it ! He'll wear me to death with

his tale of helmets. — And what on earth did you do to make them so noble ?

Dio. Speak, Aeschylus, and don't get into such a big-winded rage.

Aes. I made a drama full of Mars.

Dio. What drama ?

Aes. The *Seven Against Thebes* ; and every man who saw it burned to be a warrior.

It is pleasant to dwell on the active and soldierly qualities of a great poet, — qualities which Aeschylus did not forget, as we shall see, when he came to die, — and to recollect that not a few of the world's famous writers have been equally ready with the sword and the pen. As for the battle of Salamis, which he so graphically describes, that by a strange coincidence played a prominent part in the lives of the two other tragedians as well. Sophocles, who was then a boy of seventeen years, was chosen for his grace and comeliness to dance in the chorus of youths that celebrated the victory ; and Euripides, the youngest of the three, was, if we may believe a doubtful tradition, born on the very day of the engagement in Salamis, whither his mother, with other Athenian women, had fled for refuge.

Aeschylus, as has been intimated, belonged to one of the old eupatrid families of Attica, and

his sympathies were naturally with the aristocratic party. There is abundant testimony in his works to show how thoroughly he detested tyranny and despotism, as, for example, the proud saying in the *Persians* that the Athenians "are called the slaves and subjects of no man;" but on the other hand he was equally opposed to the popular democracy, which under the cunning guidance of Pericles was beginning to supplant the old traditional government, and which, when the hand of the master was slackened by death, was to break out into uncontrollable and fatal license. In 462 B. C. the popular party, instigated by Ephialtes, who was probably but a tool in the hands of Pericles, attacked the venerable court of the Areopagus, the assembly of Mars Hill, and stript it of its powers. Four years later, Aeschylus, then an old man, brought out the last and greatest of his plays, the Orestean trilogy, in which he uttered his vain protest against this revolution.

If any such explanation is needed, the hostility of Aeschylus to the democratic tendencies of the day may be alleged as the cause of his repeated absence from the city. In 476 B. C. he visited Syracuse at the invitation of Hiero, the tyrant, who had assembled at his brilliant

court a circle of poets including Pindar and Simonides. The particular occasion for this invitation was the founding of a new town called Aetna, in honor of which Aeschylus exhibited an appropriate drama. At least twice again he came to Sicily, and indeed it is probable that Syracuse was a second home for him during the later years of his life. Grammarians found distinct traces of the Sicilian idiom in his language, and in at least one passage of his works he has made use of a memorable Sicilian event. The description of Typho in this play, and of the rivers of fire devouring the broad fair-fruited fields of Sicily, is inspired by the eruption of Aetna which occurred in 479 or 478. Both ancient and modern critics have assumed that there must have been some special cause for his leaving Athens: according to one credulous authority he fled because the wooden benches gave way during the performance of one of his plays; according to another he was banished on account of the introduction of the Furies in the drama of that name, their appearance being so awesome that children expired and women miscarried; another would have jealousy of Sophocles, who defeated him in a tragic contest, or of Simonides, who surpassed him in his elegy over

the fallen heroes of Marathon, — foolish stories all, which have, however, a kind of interest as showing the flimsy materials out of which biographies were composed in later times. It has been supposed that he was on ill terms with the Athenians for religious indiscretions. The Athenian populace was in those days extremely bigoted in religious matters, and more than one rash man had to pay the penalty of death or exile for his free-thinking. Most notorious are the exile of Anaxagoras, although a friend of Pericles, the persecution of Euripides for his skepticism, and the execution of Socrates. There is no doubt but that Aeschylus was accused before the Areopagus of divulging the Eleusinian mysteries. A graphic but dubious account of the affair states that from some allusions in a play, in which he was himself acting the chief part, the audience conceived he was revealing the sacred mysteries, and would have killed him then and there had he not clung for refuge to the altar of Dionysus in the orchestra. Later he was tried by the court of the Areopagus, and acquitted on proving that he had never been initiated. Probably his guilt consisted in representing Artemis as the daughter of Demeter, — an Egyptian myth, as Herodotus (II. 156) as-

sures us. Whether for this reason or because of his aristocratic leaning, we are justified in believing that for a time at any rate, as Aristophanes puts it, "Aeschylus did n't just agree with the Athenians." Yet it remains true that in general he was most popular as a dramatist, and after his death it was decreed that any man who wished to bring out one of Aeschylus' plays should be furnished with a chorus. In later times tragic writers used to offer sacrifices at his tomb, as if he were the tutelary deity of their art.

His death occurred at Gela, in Sicily, in the year 456. A quaint story is told of his end. He had been warned of his fate by an oracle which declared, *A stroke from heaven shall slay thee*. So it was that an eagle carrying a tortoise in the air, and being unable to get at the meat, mistook the bald head of the poet for a stone on which he might drop his prey to crush the shell. The citizens of Gela buried him with great pomp in a public tomb, inscribing thereon an epitaph of the poet's own composing, which has been translated as follows:—

"Euphorio's son and Athens' pride lies here ;
In fertile Gela's soil he found his rest ;
His valour Marathon's wide plains declare,
As long-hair'd Medes who felt it can attest."

The creator of tragedy, the sublime singer, was proudest in death of his reputation as a soldier of Marathon.

Of the eighty or more plays composed by Aeschylus, there have come down to us only seven which early in our era were selected by the grammarians as best suited for school use. Fortunately we have among these the complete Orestean trilogy, certainly the most important of his works, and the *Prometheus Bound*, which, although far from being one of the greatest of even extant Greek tragedies, has a peculiar interest in certain respects for modern readers.

IV

PRODUCTION OF THE PLAY

THE theatre at Athens was entirely under the control of the state, and plays were given as part of the religious pomp connected with the celebration of certain festivals. Tragedy was seen in Athens only twice during the year, and this infrequency no doubt added to its impressiveness. Most of the new tragedies were brought out at the festival of the city Dionysia, whose celebration, lasting some five days, occurred about the 1st of April, when the sun shining on the southern slope of the Acropolis would give a pleasant warmth to the open-air audience.

Let us suppose Aeschylus has composed the *Prometheus*: some time then before the festival he would offer it to the Archon of the year whose duty it was to select the plays to be given. The contest lasted three days and called for a corresponding number of tragic and comic contestants, three tragedies with a satyr drama,

followed by a comedy, being given on each day. Aeschylus was already a famous poet, and the Archon would hardly refuse his group of plays including the *Prometheus Bound*. The next step was to assign Aeschylus to the proper choregus, a man chosen by turn from among the richer citizens whose duty it was to pay the cost of stage production. At first the playwright was himself the actor, but when two persons were required, a class of professional actors sprang up, and the poet and choregus had then to choose their performers. The chorus had also to be selected, twelve for each play in the time of Aeschylus, later fifteen. The poet now had a busy season before him in training his chorus and making everything ready for the final contest.

It is easy to imagine the bustling scene of the first day of the performance. Early in the morning the audience began to assemble. Needy citizens were given a special donation by the state to pay for admission, so that practically all the freemen of the community were brought together. The poorer citizens carried with them cushions to sit on, while the richer class sent their slaves before them to deposit their cushions and retain their seats. Parcels of

luncheon too might be seen under the arm of many a good citizen, for the performance was to last all day, with a proper intermission at noon. And then figs and olives and other superfluous edibles were extremely handy as missiles against an unpopular actor. Indeed, we gather that a Greek audience was anything but moderate in expressions of favor and dislike. For applause they made a clattering noise with their sandals, and their storm of abuse when displeased was sometimes far from decorous. It is well known how Demosthenes ridiculed his rival Aeschines for calamities of this sort. "You hired yourself out," he says, "to a set of howling players . . . taking the third part yourself; and gathered a stock of figs and grapes and olives, like a costermonger getting his goods from the farms, receiving more wounds from these, I think, than ever from any conflict in battle; for there was an implacable and unceasing war between you and the spectators."

When the *Prometheus* was acted, the theatre was a very simple affair. A circular orchestra with earthen floor was leveled for the chorus in the sacred enclosure of Dionysus south of the Acropolis; and behind this, partly surrounding the orchestra and extending thence up the

hillside, seats were prepared by hewing the solid rock and where necessary building up wooden benches. In the next century a great theatre of stone was erected; but as has happened in other countries, this increase in external splendor only came after the creative genius of literature had spent its force.

Let us suppose the audience assembled and that the public herald has proclaimed the contestants and the plays. The magistrates are sitting in the front row reserved to them; the ten judges who are to award the prizes have been chosen; the sacrifice to Dionysus performed; there is a moment of expectant silence, and the drama of *Prometheus* begins. To a man interested in noble forms of literature, the world could hardly offer a rarer treat or a stranger experience than the privilege of assisting at such a spectacle. Much would appear to him grotesque after the realism of the modern theatre; indeed, to enjoy the scene he would be required to put himself into a state of naïve religious enthusiasm and unquestioning idealism such as might seem impossible to our sophisticated minds.

First of all enter two allegorical beings, Power and Force, clad in some such fashion as to sym-

bolize their office. With them came the god Hephaestus bearing the implements of his trade. The two first dragged or carried into the arena Prometheus. Force is mute throughout the scene. It will be observed also that Prometheus is silent until these three have departed and he is left alone, and at once a difficult question is presented for solution. Was the figure thus dragged into the scene and chained on the rocks a living actor or a mere artificial dummy? At the time when this play was produced, everything leads us to believe that only two actors, apart from mutes, were employed at once; now if Prometheus was a living actor, it will be seen that three persons are required in the same scene. The only objection to the theory that a dummy was nailed on the rocks is the evident absurdity of the device. But such an objection is drawn from our modern point of view. Abundant evidence is forthcoming to show that a Greek audience accepted such contrivances without any thought of their absurdity; and in this very drama the appearance of Io partly disguised as a heifer, the Oceanides entering on a huge winged car, and Oceanus astride a flying horse, would sufficiently elicit the laughter of modern spectators.

It is probable, then, that Prometheus is represented by an artificial figure of superhuman size. It is more than likely too that at this time there was no stage proper elevated above the orchestra. Actors and chorus appear on the same level, though in general the actors kept to that part of the orchestra furthest from the audience and nearest to the standing scene. In this play some sort of wooden scaffolding must have been erected as a background, and to this the rebellious god is chained. It will be noticed that Hephaestus leaves the stage (I use the word loosely) before Force and Power. During the monologue of Power he has time to slip behind the scene, and so when Prometheus is left alone speaks for this character from his cover.

At the *parados*, or choral entrance, the twelve daughters of Oceanus are drawn in on a winged car, probably made to roll in on the upper part of the scaffolding in such a way as to conceal the wheels and lower structure of the machine. Their song and the lyric parts throughout I have turned into semi-poetic language to mark them off to the eye at least from the regular dialogue, which in the original is in a metre akin to our blank verse and is here translated into prose. The action of the drama, it will be seen, is di-

vided by these lyric intermezzos into a series of episodes not altogether different from our division of a play into acts. After a time, at the request of Prometheus the chorus wind down from their elevated position and take their regular place in the orchestra. Here they remain during the rest of the play, standing during most of the dialogue in double file before Prometheus; and during the lyric parts dancing back and forth in complicated figures. Their dancing, however, was not like ours, but rather a gesticulation of the whole body, waxing and waning in intensity with the sentiments expressed.

Immediately after the descent of the chorus, Oceanus enters on his winged horse, he too probably appearing above on the scaffolding. His part, which is spoken by the actor who had before appeared as Power, has little to do with the main theme except to bring out the stubborn and half mocking character of Prometheus, and he soon leaves the stage.

Then follows the first *stasimon*, or standing-song, of the chorus, who are now in position in the orchestra. After a short dialogue between Prometheus and the chorus, forming the second episode, there is a second *stasimon*, followed by

the scene in which Io appears and which forms the main interest of the play. It was peculiarly appropriate to introduce this second sufferer under the tyranny of Zeus, because from her line was to come at last Heracles, the deliverer of Prometheus. Her story moreover completes the tale of wrong; and he who suffers from the hate of Zeus is thus brought into contact with one who suffers equally from the tyrant's love.

After the third *stasimon*, where — and I say it with all reverence — Aeschylus has fallen into something like bathos from mingling realistic and idealistic motives, comes the *exodus*, or closing scene. Hermes is sent by Zeus to wrest the fatal secret from the sufferer's lips, but is defied and sent back with stinging taunts. It is probable that the final storm and tumult were represented very crudely, or left entirely to the hearer's imagination. During the last words of Prometheus the scaffolding was no doubt made to collapse, burying in its ruins the figure of the god, while the chorus of Oceanides flee to right and left. There was no curtain used, and it was always necessary to close the play in such a way that the stage should be naturally cleared; hence the name *exodus* given to the final scene.

A poet, as we have seen, gave three successive

tragedies on the same day, and these were by Aeschylus generally so connected in theme as to form something like three acts of a single play. The *Prometheus Bound* was the first of such a trilogy. Immediately after it came the *Prometheus Unbound* (of which, however, only a few fragments have reached us) where Prometheus, again represented as impaled on the rocks with the vulture preying upon his liver, is surrounded by a chorus of sympathetic Titans. The theme is a reconciliation of the two gods. Prometheus has declared that unless released from bondage he will not divulge the destined marriage of Zeus which is to produce a son greater than his father. Zeus has vowed through his messenger Hermes that he will not release Prometheus "unless some god shall appear as a voluntary successor to the suffering, and of his own free will shall go down to sunless Hades." Both of these conditions are now fulfilled. Zeus consents to release Prometheus if he will divulge the dreaded secret, and Prometheus warns him against uniting with Thetis, who is accordingly given in marriage to the mortal Peleus. Hercules, a descendant of Io, slays the vulture with his arrow and delivers the Titan. Cheiron, who is suffering from an incurable wound, offers to

die in place of Prometheus and go down to Hades. Prometheus is reconciled with Zeus, but wears ever afterwards a wreath of willow as a symbol of past error and repentance. To a modern, at least, this dénouement seems somewhat flat and without moral meaning; its significance to the Greek would lie in the recognition by both rivals of their excessive wrath and stubbornness, and in their return to the happy mean of temperance.

Of the third play in the series we know little or nothing. Probably it was *Prometheus the Fire-bringer*, and represented the bringing of fire by Prometheus to his Athenian worshippers and the institution of torch races in honor of the god. It is not altogether easy to see how such a subject could be treated, although the introduction of fire as a symbol of culture and civilization would in itself form a fitting close to the trilogy.

The tragedian's work ended with a satyr drama in which heroic and religious subjects were burlesqued, and this was followed by the boisterous humor of a comedy.

The closing ceremony of the dramatic contest was the awarding of the prizes. A public herald announced the decision of the judges,

and the victorious poet and choregus were crowned by the Archon with wreaths of ivy in the presence of the spectators. In addition to this, each of the poets who were permitted to contest received a sum of money, varying in amount, no doubt, according to their rank in the final decision. It is pleasant to know that on this occasion Aeschylus received the crown of honor.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLAY

SEVERAL questions naturally arise in regard to the *Prometheus*: What is the origin of the myth? what did it signify to Aeschylus? how did he regard the character of Zeus?

The procuring of fire, the red flower, as Kipling has so graphically called it, has given rise to innumerable myths all over the world, and in several countries has become an important part of religious belief and ceremony. Among the Hindus especially, the kindling of fire for the sacrifice by twirling one stick upon another was regarded as a most holy rite. To them the home of fire was the sky; the flame of the lightning was brought down to earth by the rain, and so lay concealed in the sap of plants, whence it was evoked by friction. In the burning of the oblation, the flames aspiring to their celestial home carried with them the offering of mankind to the gods. The stick twirled by the priest was called *pramanthas*, the rubber, and it

has been asserted that *prometheus* is but the Greek form of this same word, and that the legend of the fire-stealing Titan is merely an allegory of the old Vedic ceremony. Opinion has recently changed on this point, however, and it is now generally believed that the word *prometheus* is from quite another root and means, as the Greeks themselves maintained, the foreknower or contriver. Yet for all that the Greek legend may well be a modification of the same myth of the descent of fire so religiously cherished by their cousins, the Hindus.

The *Prometheus Bound* cannot, I think, be reckoned among the most perfect of Greek tragedies, or even as the best work of Aeschylus: its interest is too far removed from human nature, it is too fantastic for that; and yet the poet has succeeded in imbuing the drama with certain haunting ideas, half expressed and half veiled in allegory, which have been the admiration and perplexity of succeeding generations of men.

The conceptions both of progress and degeneration were common to the ancients, and these two notions meet in the *Prometheus* in a manner somewhat bewildering to the reader. The old mythical idea of the fall of mankind,

familiar to us from the book of Genesis, was widespread among the Greeks. Its embodiment in the legend of the four ages, the golden, silver, bronze, and iron, was made popular in Greece by the poet Hesiod, who laments so bitterly that he was born in this age of iron when "men cease not from labor and misery, neither by day nor night, wasting away in sorrow." But together with this gloomy view of life grew up another, that found in the toils of mankind a slow striving after a better state. Virgil, in the *Georgics*, has presented both views side by side and reconciled them for himself. "All earthly things," he says, "are doomed to fall away and slip back into chaos, like a boatman who is just managing to make head against the stream, if the tension of his arms happens to relax, and the current whirls away the boat headlong down the river's bed." "The father himself willed that the way of the laborer should be hard . . . sharpening the hearts of mankind by cares." The tendency of the world is ever backward toward chaos, but in man resides a power, his will, which may lead him always to a higher state. "Stern labor has conquered all things."

Of all the classic authors Lucretius has spoken

with the surest note. He has given us a description of the gradual development and civilization of mankind which has never been surpassed for graphic force. His account of the early state of men affords an interesting parallel to the picture presented by Aeschylus. "But the race of mankind then in the fields was much hardier, as beseemed it to be, since the earth had produced it; and built on a groundwork of larger and more solid bones within. . . . Among acorn-bearing oaks they would refresh their bodies for the most part; and the arbutu-berries which you now see in the winter-time ripen with a bright scarlet hue, the earth would then bear in greatest plenty and of a larger size. . . . But rivers and springs invited to slake thirst, even as now a rush of water down from the great hills summons with clear splash far and wide the thirsty races of wild beasts. Then too as they ranged about they would occupy the well-known woodland haunts of the nymphs, out of which they knew that smooth-gliding streams of water with a copious gush bathed the dripping rocks, the dripping rocks, trickling down over the green moss; and in parts welled and bubbled out over the level plain. And as yet they knew not how to apply fire to their purposes or to make

use of skins and clothe their body in the spoils of wild beasts, but they would dwell in woods and mountain-caves and forests and shelter in the brushwood their squalid limbs when driven to shun the buffeting of the winds and the rain." Thereupon follows the story of man's rise, the building of huts and invention of clothes, the finding of fire, the growth of language, the gradual development of the arts and sciences. In one respect only his picture of primitive man is quite different from the account in the *Prometheus*. The savage of Lucretius is free and strong, a true animal of nature; Aeschylus thinks of him as subject to all the infirmities of civilization without the compensating art of healing.

The conception of progress, not through labor and will-power as Virgil understood it, but rather through the intellectual faculties, underlies in the *Prometheus* the fable of the stealing of fire. The opposite conception takes on a form so peculiar to Greece that some explanation of its meaning may be demanded.

The commonest and most binding law of conduct for the Greek was expressed in the saying Nothing too much. This was that law of moderation and harmony which they held to be as

important in the offices of life as in the productions of art. And this law, when raised into the sphere of religion, became embodied in the peculiarly Greek dread of the Divine Envy. Man as a mortal should think as a mortal; any act that raises him beyond his proper realm is a revolt against that order of things which Aeschylus calls "the harmony of Zeus;" and his transgression of the bounds is punished by Nemesis or the avenging Furies. I have called this dread of the divine envy peculiarly Greek; but this is true of its form only, for the same innate fear of a jealous God is common among savages, is expressed in the Hebrew story of the fall of man, underlies the Christian doctrine of the atonement, and may in fact be deemed one of the universal ideas of the race born from a long and painful struggle with the thwarting circumstances of nature. Now it is this same notion of the divine envy that Aeschylus has expressed in the allegory of Zeus and Prometheus. Zeus would thrust mankind back into darkness, fearing lest they should grow strong and conspire against his throne, as he in his time had conspired against Cronos; whereas Prometheus is a symbol of the upward striving force in mankind. But it must not be supposed that

Aeschylus was consciously dealing in allegory. There was in his mind something of the primitive mytho-poetic power of the early ages, and his ideas were only half abstracted from the concrete forms they had assumed in mythology. He had in fact to a high degree the formative sense that must always accompany poetic genius.

Critics have been troubled at the position of Zeus in this play. How did Aeschylus reconcile the god's vindictive cruelty with the belief he elsewhere so strongly avows in the justice of Zeus? I think we must simply accept the difficulty. The Greeks beheld the cruelty of life with unblenching vision; Nemesis awaited those who climbed too high even by force of their virtues. They also had a firm belief in the divine harmony of the world and in the justice of God. Aeschylus did not attempt in the *Prometheus Unbound* any metaphysical reconciliation of these opposing views; nor has the wit of man through thousands of years found the solution of this mystery. The guilty and the innocent suffer to-day as they did in the age of Aeschylus. We can only, as the Greek did before us, make sure that happiness so far as it lies under our own control must come from

adjusting our lives to a belief in the world's harmony and justice, and from an unshaken though inexplicable conviction that somehow "Zeus bringeth mortal men on the way of knowledge, having made good the law that wisdom comes through suffering."

It is perhaps chiefly through this notion of "wisdom by suffering" symbolized in the torture of the Titan champion of mankind, that the *Prometheus* has taken such a strong hold on the sympathy of the Christian world. The long and hardly learned lesson of humanity is here presented to us in the form of a divine tragedy, and even the fanatic Tertullian did not hesitate to compare the story of the Titan with the sufferings of Christ; no one to-day, I think, can read this strange drama without feeling that more is meant than meets the eye, and that in it lie prefigured, dimly and unconsciously, much that the world was to learn and endure. Many modern poets have been haunted by the spell of this old Greek poem. Milton drew inspiration from this source for his Satan; Goethe began a drama on the same subject, which however he never finished; Byron acknowledged his indebtedness to Aeschylus for his *Manfred*; and Shelley has attempted to replace the lost *Prometheus Un-*

bound by a drama of the same name indeed, but instinct with romantic and it must be confessed somewhat crude ideas. But for simplicity and grandeur and haunting suggestiveness the work of Aeschylus still wears the crown bestowed on it by the Athenian people.

THE PERSONS

POWER AND FORCE.

HEPHAESTUS.

PROMETHEUS.

CHORUS OF OCEANIDES.

OCEANUS.

IO.

HERMES.

The scene throughout is a rocky gorge in Scythia.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Prologue and Prometheus' Soliloquy

*Enter POWER and FORCE, carrying PROMETHEUS; also
HEPHAESTUS*

Scene, a rocky gorge in Scythia

POWER

To this far region of the earth, this pathless wilderness of Scythia, at last we are come. O Hephaestus, thine is the charge, on thee are laid the Father's commands in never-yielding fetters linked of adamant to bind this miscreant to the high-ridged rocks. For this is he who stole the flame of all-working fire, thy own bright flower, and gave to mortal men. Now for the evil done he pays this forfeit to the gods; so haply he shall learn some patience with the reign of Zeus and put away his love for human kind.

HEPHAESTUS

O Power and Force, your share in the command of Zeus is done, and for you nothing remains; but I — some part of courage still is wanting to bind with force a kindred god to this

winter-bitten gorge. Yet must I summon daring to my heart, such dread dwells in the father's word. — (*To PROMETHEUS.*) O high magnanimous son of prudent Themis, against thy will and mine with brazen bonds no hand can loose I bind thee to this unvisited lonely rock. No human voice will reach thee here, nor any form of man be seen. Parched by the blazing fires of the sun thy skin shall change its pleasant hue; grateful to thee the starry-kirtled night shall come veiling the day, and grateful again the sun dispelling the morn's white frost. Forever the weariness of unremitting pain shall waste thy strength, for he is not born who can deliver thee. See now the profit of thy human charity: thou, a god not fearing the wrath of the gods, hast given to mortal men honors beyond their due; and therefore on this joyless rock thou must keep vigil, sleepless and weary-clinging, with unbended knees, pouring out thy ceaseless lamentations and unheeded cries; for the mind of Zeus knows no turning, and ever harsh the hand that newly grasps the sway.

POWER

It may be so, yet why seek delay in vainly spent pity? Feel you no hatred for this enemy

of the gods, who hath betrayed to mortals your own chief honor ?

HEPHAESTUS

Kinship and old fellowship will have their due.

POWER

'Tis true ; but where is strength to disobey the father's words ? Fearest thou not rather this ?

HEPHAESTUS

Ever merciless thou art, and steeped in cruelty.

POWER

It healeth nothing to weep for him. Take not up an idle burden wherein there is no profit.

HEPHAESTUS

Alas, my cherished craft, thrice hateful now !

POWER

Why hateful ? In simple sooth thy art hath no blame for these present ills.

HEPHAESTUS

Yet would it were another's, not mine!

POWER

All toil alike in sorrow, unless one were lord
of heaven; none is truly free, save only Zeus.

HEPHAESTUS

This task confirms it; I can nothing deny.

POWER

Make haste then to bind him in fetters, lest
the father detect thee loitering.

HEPHAESTUS

Behold the curb; it is ready to hand.

POWER

Strongly with thy hammer, strongly weld it
about his hands; make him fast to the rock.

HEPHAESTUS

The work goes on, it is well done.

POWER

Harder strike them, tighter draw the links,
leave nothing loose; strange skill he hath to find
a way where none appeared.

HEPHAESTUS

One arm is fastened, and none may loose it.

POWER

Fetter the other, make it sure; he shall learn how all his cunning is folly before Zeus.

HEPHAESTUS

Save now my art hath never wrought harm to any.

POWER

Now strongly drive the biting tooth of the adamantine wedge straight through his breast.

HEPHAESTUS

Alas, Prometheus! I groan for thy pangs.

POWER

Dost thou shrink? Wilt thou groan for the foes of Zeus? Take heed, lest thou groan for thyself.

HEPHAESTUS

Thou lookest upon a spectacle grievous to the eye.

POWER

I look upon one suffering as he deserves. — Now about his sides strain tight the girth.

HEPHAESTUS

It must needs be done ; yet urge me not overmuch.

POWER

Yet will I urge and harry thee on. — Now lower ; with force constrain his legs.

HEPHAESTUS

'Tis even done ; nor was the labor long.

POWER

Weld fast the galling fetters ; remember that he who appraises is strict to exact.

HEPHAESTUS

Cruel thy tongue, and like thy cruel face.

POWER

Be thine the tender heart ! Rebuke not my bolder mood, nor chide my austerity.

HEPHAESTUS

Let us go ; now the clinging web binds all his limbs. [*Exit.*

POWER

There, wanton, in thy insolence ! Now for thy creatures of a day filch divine honors. Tell me,

will mortal men drain for thee these tortures?
 Falsely the gods call thee Prometheus, the Con-
 triver, for no cunning contrivance shall help thee
 to slip from this bondage. [*Exeunt POWER and FORCE.*

PROMETHEUS (*solus*)

O air divine, and O swift-wingèd winds!
 Ye river fountains, and thou myriad-twinkling
 Laughter of ocean waves! O mother earth!
 And thou, O all-discerning orb o' the sun!—
 To you, I cry to you; behold what I,
 A god, endure of evil from the gods.

Behold, with what dread torments
 I through the slow-revolving
 Ages of time must wrestle;
 Such hideous bonds the new lord
 Of heaven hath found for my torture.
 Woe! woe! for the present disasters
 I groan, and for those that shall come;
 Nor know I in what far sky,
 The dawn of deliverance shall rise.

Yet what is this I say? All future things
 I see unerring, nor shall any chance
 Of evil overtake me unaware.
 The will of Destiny we would endure

Lightly if may be, knowing still how vain
To take up arms against Necessity.
Silent I cannot keep, I cannot tongue
These strange calamities. Lo, I am he
Who, darkly hiding in a fennel reed
Fountains of fire, so secretly purloined
And gave to be the teacher of all arts
And giver of all good to mortal men.
And now this forfeit for my sin I pay,
Thus lodged in fetters under the bare sky.

Woe's me!
What murmur hovereth near?
What odor, where visible shape
Is none? Some god, or a mortal,
Or one of the middle race?
Hath he come to this world's-end
Idly to gloat o'er my toils,
Or what would he have? — Behold me
Fettered, the god ill-fated,
The foeman of Zeus, the detested
Of all who enter his courts,
And only because of my love,
My too-great love for mankind.
Ah me! once more the murmur
I hear as of hovering birds;
And the air is whirring with quick

Beating of wings. For me
There is fear, whatever approaches.

Choral entrance

Enter the chorus of OCEANIDES drawn in a winged car

CHORUS

Fear nothing ; in friendship and eager
With wingèd contention of speed
Together we draw near thy rock.
Scarce we persuaded our father,
But now at last the swift breezes
Have brought us. Down in the depth
Of our sea-cave came the loud noise
Of the welding of iron ; and wonderment
Banished our maiden shame ;
All in haste, unsandalled, hither
We flew in this wingèd car.

PROMETHEUS

Ah me ! ah me !
O all ye children of Tethys,
Daughters of father Oceanus
Who ever with tide unwearied
Revolveth the whole world round, —
Behold how prisoned in chains
On the dizzy verge of this gorge
Forever I keep sad watch.

CHORUS

I see, O Prometheus, thy body
In the toils and torture of bondage
Withering here on this rock ;
And a mist as of terror, a cloud
Of tears o'er veils my eyes :
New helmsmen guide in the heavens,
And Zeus unlawfully rules
With new laws, and the might of old
He hath banished to uttermost darkness.

PROMETHEUS

Would that me too he had hurled,
Bound in these cruel, unyielding
Bonds, down, down under earth,
Beneath wide Hades, where go
The tribe of innumerable dead,
Down to the infinite depths
Of Tartarus! There no god,
No mortal would gloat o'er my ruin.
Now like a toy of the winds
I hang, my anguish a joy
To my foes.

CHORUS

Who of the gods is so hardened?
To whom is thy sorrow a joy?

Who save only Zeus
But feels the pang of thy torments?
But he, ever savage of soul,
Swayeth the children of heaven;
Nor ever will cease till his heart
Is satiate grown, or another
Snatches the empire by guile.

PROMETHEUS

Ay, and this Lord of the blessed
Shall call in the fulness of time
Upon me whom he tortures in bondage,
Shall implore me to utter the plot
That will rob him of honor and throne.
No sweet-lipped charm of persuasion
Then shall allure me, and never
In cringing fear of his threats
The knowledge will I impart,
Till first he has loosened these bonds,
And for all my anguish he too
Hath humbled his neck unto judgment.

CHORUS

Bold art thou, and calamity
Softens thee not, but ever
Thy thought is quick on thy tongue.
Terror pierceth my heart,

And fearing I ask what shore,
 O wanderer tempest-tost,
 Far-off of peace shall receive thee !
 Stern is the son of Cronos,
 And deaf his heart to beseeching.

PROMETHEUS

I know of his hardness, I know
 That justice he holds in his palm ;
 Yet his pride shall be humbled, I think ;
 His hardness made soft, and his wrath
 Shall bow to the blows of adversity ;
 He, too, in milder mood
 Shall come, imploring of me
 The friendship I willingly grant.

First Episode

CHORUS

Unfold to us the whole story. For what crime
 does Zeus so shamefully and bitterly torture you ?
 Tell us, if there is no harm in telling.

PROMETHEUS

Painful are these things to relate, painful is
 silence, and all is wretchedness. When first the
 gods knew wrath, and faction raised its head

amongst them, and some would tear old Cronos from his throne that Zeus might take his place, and others were determined that Zeus should never reign over the gods, then I with wise counsel sought to guide the Titans, children of Earth and Sky, — but all in vain. My crafty schemes they disdained, and in their pride of strength thought it were easy to make themselves lords by force. Often to me my mother Themis (or call her Earth, for many names she hath, being one) had foretold in oracles what was to be, with warning that not by might or brutal force should victory come, but by guile alone. So I counselled them, but they turned their eyes from me in impatience. Many plans I weighed, and at last my mother's wisdom prevailed with me to join my will with the will of Zeus. By my advice the cavernous gloom of Tartarus now hides in night old Cronos and his peers. Thus the new tyrant of heaven took profit of me, and thus rewards me with these torments. 'Tis the disease of tyranny, no more, to take no heed of friendship. You ask why he tortures me; hear now the reason. No sooner was he established on his father's throne than he began to award various offices to the different gods, ordering his government throughout. Yet no care was in

his heart for miserable men, and he was fain to blot out the whole race and in their stead create another. None save me opposed his purpose; I only dared; I rescued mankind from the heavy blow that was to cast them into Hades. Therefore I am bowed down by this anguish, painful to endure, pitiable to behold. Mercy I had for mortals, but found no mercy for myself: so pitiously I am disciplined, an ignoble spectacle for Zeus.

CHORUS

Fashioned of rock is he, and iron is his heart, O Prometheus, who feels not indignation at thy disasters. Rather would I not have seen them at all, and seeing them I am sore of heart.

PROMETHEUS

To my very friends I am a spectacle of pity.

CHORUS

Yet it may be — did thy transgressions end there?

PROMETHEUS

Through me mankind ceased to foresee death.

CHORUS

What remedy could heal that sad disease?

PROMETHEUS

Blind hopes I made to dwell in them.

CHORUS

O merciful boon for mortals.

PROMETHEUS

And more than all I gave them fire.

CHORUS

And so in their brief life they are lords of flaming fire?

PROMETHEUS

Through it they will learn many arts.

CHORUS

And was it for crimes like this Zeus —

PROMETHEUS

Tortures me, and ceases not nor relents.

CHORUS

And is there no goal to the struggle before thee?

PROMETHEUS

There is none, save when it seems to him good.

CHORUS

When shall it so seem? what hope? seest thou not thy error? That thou hast erred, I say in sorrow and with sorrow to thee. But enough of that; seek thou some release from the conflict.

PROMETHEUS

How easy for one who fares in pleasant ways to admonish those in adversity. But all this I knew; with open eyes, with willing mind, I sinned; I do not deny it. Mankind I helped, but could not help myself. Yet I dreamed not that here in this savage solitary gorge, on this high rock, I should waste away beneath such torments. Yet care not to bewail these present disasters; but descend to the earth, and hear of the woes to come and all that is to be. I pray you heed my word; have compassion on one who is now caught in the toils; for sorrow flitteth now to one and now to another, and visiteth each in his turn.

CHORUS

We list to your words, O Prometheus. —
Lo, with light foot I step
From the swift-rushing car; the pure air,
The highway I leave of the birds;
And now to the rugged earth

I descend. I listen, I wait
For thy story of pain and disaster.

Enter OCEANUS, borne on a winged horse

OCEANUS

To thee I come, O Prometheus ;
Borne on this swift-wingèd bird
That knoweth the will of his rider
And needeth no curb, from afar
I have flown a wearisome way,
Weary but ended at last.
I am grieved with thy grief ; I am drawn
By our kinship, and even without it
Thee more than all others I honor.
I speak simple sooth, and my tongue
Knows not to flatter in idleness.
Nay, tell me what aid I may render ;
For never thy lips shall avow
Oceanus failed thee in friendship.

PROMETHEUS

What then, art thou too come to stare upon
my ruin ? What new daring has brought thee
from thy ocean stream and thy rock-roofed un-
built caverns hither to our earth, the mother
of iron ? Art thou come to view my fate with
indignation for my calamities ? Behold the

spectacle! behold me, the friend of Zeus, who helped him to a throne, now bowed down by his torments.

OCEANUS

I see, Prometheus; and, though thou art thyself cunning in device, I would admonish thee to prudence. Learn to know thyself, put on the habit of new ways, for there is a new tyrant among the gods. If still thou hurlest forth these harsh and biting words, perchance from afar off, Zeus, sitting above, may hear thee, and thy present burden of sorrows will seem as the sport of children. But, O wretched sufferer, put away thy moody wrath, and seek some respite from thy ills. My advice may sound as the trite sayings of old, yet thou thyself canst see what are the wages of too bold a tongue. Thou hast not learned humility, nor to yield to evils, but rather wouldst add others new to thy present store. Take me for thy teacher, and kick not against the pricks, for there rules in heaven an austere monarch who is responsible to none. Now I will go and make trial to win thy release from this grievous state. Do thou keep thy peace, and restrain thy blustering speech. Or knowest thou not in thy wisdom what penalties overtake an idle tongue?

PROMETHEUS

I give you joy that, having shared and dared with me, you have still kept yourself free of blame. I bid you trouble not your peace; his will is immutable and you cannot persuade him. Even beware, lest by your going you bring sorrow upon yourself.

OCEANUS

Thou art wiser to think for others than for thyself, and this I infer from the events. But deter me not from going, for I boast, yes, I may boast, that Zeus will grant me this boon and deliver thee from these toils.

PROMETHEUS

I thank you with gratitude that shall never fail, for you lack nothing in zeal. But trouble not yourself; it is idle, and your care will avail me nothing, despite your zeal. Hold your peace, and keep your foot well from these snares. If I suffer, let me suffer alone. Yet not alone, for I am burdened by the fate of Atlas, my brother. He in the far western ways stands bearing on his shoulders the mighty pillar of earth and sky, a weary burden to hold. And I have seen with pity the earth-born dweller of the Sicilian caves,

the impetuous, the hundred-headed Typho, who others could bend by force, who durst withstand the host of the gods, hissing forth terror from his horrid throats, whilst Gorgonian fires flamed from his eyes, as if to take by violence the very throne of Zeus; but the unsleeping weapon of Zeus fell upon him, the down-rushing thunderbolt with breath of flame, and smote him from his loud-vaunted boastings; and stricken to the heart he was scorched to embers, and thunder rent from him his strength. Now a helpless sprawling bulk he lies near the ocean strait, buried beneath the roots of Aetna; whilst above on the utmost summit Hephaestus welds the molten ore. Thence some day, I ween, shall burst forth rivers of fire to devour with savage maw the wide fields of fair-fruited Sicily, — such wrath shall Typho, scorched by the thunder of Zeus, send up, a tempest, terrible, seething, with breath of flame. — But thou art not untried, and needest not me for a teacher. Save thyself, as thou best knowest how; and leave me to drain this flood of calamity, till the mind of Zeus grows light of its anger.

OCEANUS

Knowest thou not, Prometheus, there are words of healing for a mind distempered?

PROMETHEUS

Ay, if in good time we soothe the heart, nor violently repress its tumid rage.

OCEANUS

In prudent zeal and daring combined, tell me what peril hidden lies.

PROMETHEUS

Labor in vain and vain simplicity.

OCEANUS

Leave me, I prythee, to my mind's disease; for it is well having wisdom not to appear wise.

PROMETHEUS

The folly of thy mission will seem mine.

OCEANUS

It is clear your words dismiss me home.

PROMETHEUS

Your tears for me might win hatred for yourself.

OCEANUS

His hatred you mean, who newly wears the sovereignty?

PROMETHEUS

Ay, his; beware that you vex not his heart.

OCEANUS

I am gone even with your words. See, the wingèd beast flutters the broad path of the air; gladly would he bend the weary knee in his stall at home. [*Exit* OCEANUS.]

First Stasimon

CHORUS

I mourn, O Prometheus, for thee,
 I wail for thy hapless fate;
 And tears in a melting flood
 Flow down from the fount of my eyes,
 Drenching my cheeks. O insolent
 Laws, O sceptre of Zeus,
 How over the gods of old
 Ye wield despotic might!

Lo, all the land groans aloud;
 And the people that dwell in the West
 Lament for thy time-honored reign
 And the sway of thy kindred, Prometheus;
 And they who have builded their homes
 In holy Asia to the wail

Of thine anguish lament ; and they
Of the Colchian land, the virgins
Exulting in war ; and the Scythians
By the far Maeotian Lake
In the uttermost regions of earth ;
And the martial flower of Arabia,
Whose battle resounds with the crashing
Of brazen spears, they too
In their citadel reared aloft
Near Caucasus groan for thy fate.
One other, a Titan god,
I have seen in his anguish,
Atlas, the mighty one, bound
In chains adamantine, who still
With groaning upholds on his back
The high-arched vault of the skies.
While ever the surge of the sea
Moans to the sound of his cry,
And the depths of its waters lament ;
The fountains of hallowed rivers
Sigh for his anguish in pity ;
While from its dark abyss
The unseen world far below
Mutters and rumbles in concert.

Second Episode

PROMETHEUS

Think not I am silent through pride or insolence; dumb rage gnaws at my very heart for this outrage upon me. Yet who but I established these new gods in their honors? But I speak not of this, for already you are aware of the truth. Rather listen to the sad story of mankind, who like children lived until I gave them understanding and a portion of reason; yet not in disparagement of men I speak, but meaning to set forth the greatness of my charity. For seeing they saw not, and hearing they understood not, but like as shapes in a dream they wrought all the days of their life in confusion. No houses of brick raised in the warmth of the sun they had, nor fabrics of wood, but like the busied ants they dwelt underground in the sunless depth of caverns. No certain sign of approaching winter they knew, no harbinger of flowering spring or fruitful summer; ever they labored at random, till I taught them to discern the seasons by the rising and the setting of the stars. Numbers I invented for them, the chiefest of all discoveries; I taught them the grouping of letters, to be a memorial and record of

the past, the mistress of the arts and mother of the Muses. I first brought under the yoke beasts of burden, who by draft and carrying relieved men of their hardest labors; I yoked the proud horse to the chariot, teaching him obedience to the reins, to be the adornment of wealth and luxury. I too contrived for men sea-faring vessels with their flaxen wings. Alas for me! such inventions I found for mankind, but for myself I have no cunning to escape disaster.

CHORUS

Sorrow and humiliation are your portion: you have failed in understanding and wandered astray; and like a poor physician falling into sickness you despond and know not the remedies for your own disease.

PROMETHEUS

Hear but the rest, and you will wonder more at my inventions and many arts. If sickness visited them, they had no healing drug, no salve or soothing potion, but wasted away for want of remedies, and this was my greatest boon; for I brought to them the mingling of bland medicaments for the banishing of all diseases. And many modes of divination I appointed: from

dreams I first taught them to judge what should befall in waking state ; I found the subtle interpretation of words half heard or heard by chance, and of meetings by the way ; and the flight of taloned birds with their promise of fortune or failure I clearly denoted, their various modes of life, their mutual feuds, their friendships and consortings ; I taught men to observe the smooth plumpness of entrails, and the color pleasing to the gods, and the mottled symmetry of gall and liver. Burning the thigh-bones wrapt in fat and the long chine, I guided mankind to a hidden art, and read to them the intimations of the altar-flames that before were meaningless. And the secret treasures of the earth, copper, iron, silver, gold, — who but I could boast their discovery ? No one, I ween, unless in idle vaunting. Nay, hear the whole matter in a word, — all human arts are from Prometheus.

CHORUS

Care not for mortals overmuch, whilst you neglect your own profit. Indeed, I am of good hope that yet some day, freed from bondage, you shall equal the might of Zeus.

PROMETHEUS

Not yet hath all-ordaining Destiny decreed my release ; but after many years, broken by a world of disaster and woe, I shall be delivered. The craft of the forger is weaker far than Necessity.

CHORUS

Who then holds the helm of Necessity ?

PROMETHEUS

The Fates triform and the unforgetting Furies.

CHORUS

And Zeus, is he less in power than these ?

PROMETHEUS

He may not avoid what is destined.

CHORUS

What is destined for Zeus but endless rule ?

PROMETHEUS

Ask not, neither set thy heart on knowing.

CHORUS

Some solemn secret thou wouldst clothe in mystery.

PROMETHEUS

Speak no more of it; the time is not yet to divulge it, and the secret must still be shrouded. Harboring this I shall one day escape from this outrage and ignominy of bondage.

Second Stasimon

CHORUS

May never Zeus, the all-wielder,
Against my feeble will
Set his strength; nor ever may I
By the stanchless flood of my father,
By the shores of Oceanus, cease
With hallowed offering of oxen
To worship the gods. May never
My tongue give offence, but always
This purpose abide in my soul.
Ah, sweet to prolong our days
In the courage of hope, and sweet
With ever dawning delights
To nourish the heart. I shudder,
Prometheus, for thee, for thy weight
Of myriad-pilèd woe;
Ay, fearing not Zeus, in self-will
Too much thou honorest mortals,
For thankless thy favor, O friend :

And where is the valor, what help
From men who appear and are gone?
Their weakness hast thou not discovered,
Their feeble blindness wherein
Like dreaming shadows they move?
Never their counsels shall break
Through the harmony ordered of Zeus.

I too have pondered this wisdom,
Beholding thy terrible ruin,
Prometheus. Ah me, for the change!
With what other notes I chanted
Thy bridal song, the shrill
Hymenean strains at the bath
And the couch, on the happy day
When our sister Hesione, won
By thy bounty, entered thy home!

Third Episode

*Enter Io, transformed in part to a heifer, followed by the
Spectre of ARGUS*

IO

What land have I reached? what people?
Who is this I behold in chains
On this storm-riven rock? What crime
Hath brought thee to perishing thus?

Ah whither, to what far regions
Hath misery borne me? Ah me!
Once more I am stung by the gadfly,
Pursued by the wraith of dead Argus.
Save me, O Earth! Once more
In my terror I see him, the watcher;
He is there, and his myriad eyes
Are upon me. Shall earth nevermore
Conceal her buried dead?
He hath come from the pit to pursue me,
He drives me weary and famished
Over the long sea sands;
And ever his shrill scannel pipe,
Waxen-jointed, is droning forth
A slumberous strain.

Alas!

To what land far-off have I wandered?
What error, O Zeus, what crime
Is mine that thus I am yoked
Unto misery? Why am I stung
With frenzy that drives me unresting
Forever? Let fires consume me;
Let the deep earth yawning engulf me;
Or the monstrous brood of the sea
Devour; but O great King,
Hark to my pleading for respite!

I have wandered enough, I am weary,
 And still I discern no repose. —
 (*To PROMETHEUS.*) And thou, hast thou heard
 me, the virgin
 Wearing these horns of a heifer?

PROMETHEUS

I hear the frenzied child of Inachus,
 The maiden who with love could all inflame
 Great Zeus's heart, and now by Hera's hate
 Forever flees before this stinging pest.

IO

Thou knowest my father then?
 And who, I prythee, art thou
 That callest me thus by name,
 Oh name most wretched! and tellest
 The wasting plague heaven-sent
 And the pest with its haunting sting?
 Ah me! behold I am come
 With leapings of madness, by hunger
 And craving impelled, and subdued
 By the crafty anger of Hera.
 Who in this world of calamity,
 Who suffers as I? — But thou,
 If thou canst, declare what awaits me
 Of sorrow; what healing balm

I may find. Speak thou, I implore thee,
I, the wandering virgin of sorrows.

PROMETHEUS

Clearly I will set forth all you would learn ;
speaking not in dark riddles, but in full simpli-
city, as speech is due between friends. Behold,
I whom you see am Prometheus, the giver of fire
to mankind.

IO

You who appeared to men with all-sufficient
bounty, — tell me why are you, O enduring Pro-
metheus, given over to chastisement ?

PROMETHEUS

But now I have ceased bewailing these calami-
ties.

IO

And will you deny me this simple boon ?

PROMETHEUS

What do you ask ? you may learn all from
me.

IO

Declare who chained you to this rocky gorge.

PROMETHEUS

The will of Zeus, but Hephaestus' hand.

IO

For what crimes are you punished thus?

PROMETHEUS

I have told you enough ; ask no more.

IO

One further boon : what term shall end my wanderings? what time is ordained for my peace?

PROMETHEUS

Better for you not to know than to know.

IO

Yet hide not what remains for me to endure.

PROMETHEUS

So much alone I am willing to grant.

IO

Why then do you delay? I would know all.

PROMETHEUS

It is not churlishness ; I am loth to bruise your heart.

IO

Spare me not further than I myself desire.

PROMETHEUS

Since you so crave, it is well ; hear me then.

CHORUS

Nay, not yet. Grant me also a share in your grace. Let us first hear from her the story of her sorrow and the disasters that prey on her life. Then do you declare to her what struggle still remains.

PROMETHEUS

'Tis for thee, Io, to bestow this favor ; and fittingly, for these are thy father's sisters. Time is not lost, I deem, in bewailing and mourning our fate when answering tears stand ready in the listener's eye.

IO

Hard would it be to disregard your wish ;
And if my words have credit in your ears
The tale is rendered. Yet as one who speaks
And still laments, my sorrows I recount, —
How wild, perturbing wonders in my soul
Wrought by the will of heaven, and how in shape
This bestial transformation I endured.
For always in the drowsy hours of night
I, sleeping in my virgin chambers, saw
Strange visitations pass, and as they passed
Each smiled and whispered: O sweet-favored girl,

Why cherish long thy maiden loneliness,
When love celestial calleth? Fair art thou,
And thronèd Zeus, heart-smitten with desire,
Yearns from his heaven to woo thee. Nay, sweet
child,

Disdain him not. Now to the meadow land
Of Lerna, where thy father's pastures lie
And the sleek cattle browse, do thou steal forth
Alone, and haply there thy yielding grace
May soothe the passion in the Sovereign's eye. —
Such dreams, filling with fear the hours of sleep,
Drove me at last to tell my father all.

And he was troubled; many times in doubt
To Pythian Delphi and the speaking oaks
Of far Dodona messengers he sent,
Inquiring by what act or pleasing word
The grace of heaven to win. But ever these
With oracles of shifting speech returned,
Inexplicably dark. Yet in the end
Came one clear cruel utterance, oh, too clear!
That bade him drive me forth from home and
land,

An exile doomed in solitary ways
To wander to the confines of the world.
With such commands came words of dreadful
import,
And threats of flaming thunderbolts from Zeus

With burning wrath to desolate his race,
If he durst disobey. Much doubted he,
But at the last Apollo's warning voice
And Zeus's curb upon his soul prevailed :
He drave me forth, and all my life's young joy
Ended in bitter grief for him and me.
Straightway my form this strange distortion
knew,

With horns here on my front ; and madly stung
By this insatiate fly, with antic bounds
I sped away to the sweet-flowing fount
Of Cenchreae and the Lernéan well ;
While close upon me Argus, born of earth,
Savage and sleepless trailed, his wakeful eyes
Fixed on my track. And though a sudden fate
Him overmastered, yet this stinging fly
Still with his lash pursues from land to land. —
Such is my tale ; and now if in thy wit
It lies to prophesy what toils remain,
So say, nor by false pitying speech misguide ;
For glozing words I deem the worst disease.

CHORUS

Oh strange ! Oh, more than incredible !
Never I thought such words
Surpassing the wildest belief
Should enter my ears, such a tale

Of horror and woe and calamity.
I am stung to the soul, and compassion
Benumbs my heart. O Fate!
Alas, O Fate! I shudder
Beholding the lot of this maiden.

PROMETHEUS

You are quick to lament and very prone to
fear. Yet wait a little till you have heard what
remains.

CHORUS

Speak, tell us all; to the sick it is sweet to
know betimes what awaits them of pain.

PROMETHEUS

Lightly I granted your former request, for you
desired first to hear from her lips the story of
her conflict; hear now the evils that Hera hath
still in store for this virgin; — and do you, O
daughter of Inachus, take my words to your
heart that you may know the goal of your wan-
derings. — Turn first toward the rising sun, and
thitherward proceeding over unplowed fields you
will reach the nomad Scythians, a people of
mighty archers, who in the wicker-woven houses
dwell aloft on smooth-rolling wagons. Approach
not these, but pass on through the land, keep-

ing ever near to the surf-beaten shores of the Euxine. To the right dwell the Chalybes, famous workers of iron; and of them you must beware, for they are a savage race and regard not strangers. Then will you come to the River of Violence, fierce as its name and treacherous to ford; cross not over it until you have reached the Caucasus, highest of mountains, where the river pours out its fury over the brows of the cliffs. Here over the star-neighboring summits you must toil and turn to the southern path: so in time you will reach the host of the Amazons, ever hostile to men, who one day shall inhabit Themiscyra on the Thermodon, where Salmydessus opens upon the sea her ravenous jaws, a terror to strange sailors, a cruel stepdame to ships. Gladly the Amazons will guide thee on thy way. And thou wilt come to the Cimmerian isthmus by the narrow gateway of the pool; and leaving this with brave heart thou wilt cross over the Maeotic strait, which ever after in memorial of thy crossing men shall call the Bosphorus, the fording of the heifer. Thus thou wilt abandon the plain of Europe and venture on the continent of Asia.—Now doth not the tyrant of the gods seem to you altogether violent? Behold how this god, de-

siring to mingle with a mortal woman, hath imposed on her these wanderings. — Thou hast met, O maiden, a bitter claimant for thy favor; and the words thou hast heard are but the prelude to what must follow.

IO

Alas, for me!

PROMETHEUS

Once more you cry out and groan; what will you do when you have learned the troubles that remain?

CHORUS

Nay, have you calamities still to recount.

PROMETHEUS

As it were a stormy sea of lamentable woe.

IO

What profit have I in life? Why do I not hurl myself out of hand from this rude precipice, that broken on the plain below I may have speedy respite from my troubles? It were better to die once for all than to drag out my lingering days in anguish.

PROMETHEUS

How hardly would you endure my struggles, for death that would release me from my woes is denied me by Destiny. Now there is no goal before me of my conflict until Zeus is thrown from his supremacy.

IO

And shall Zeus ever fall from power?

PROMETHEUS

You would rejoice, I think, to see his overthrow.

IO

Why should I not, who am abused by Zeus?

PROMETHEUS

You may learn from me that your wish is truth.

IO

Who shall despoil him of the tyrant's sceptre?

PROMETHEUS

He shall himself despoil by his own folly.

IO

How may it be? Speak, if there is no harm.

PROMETHEUS

An ill-fated espousal shall work him grief.

IO

A spouse divine or human? tell if thou mayst.

PROMETHEUS

What is it to thee? I may not speak her name.

IO

His bride shall drag him from the throne?

PROMETHEUS

A son she shall bear, mightier than his father.

IO

Hath he no refuge from this doom?

PROMETHEUS

There is none, except I be loosed from my bonds.

IO

Who is to loose thee against the will of Zeus?

PROMETHEUS

Thy own children's child must do the deed.

IO

What sayest thou? my son shall end thy evils?

PROMETHEUS

The third after the tenth generation.

IO

Thy oracle is dark to my understanding.

PROMETHEUS

Pass it by ; thy own ill fate is involved therein.

IO

The boon is offered, and straightway thou withdrawest it.

PROMETHEUS

I grant thee the knowledge of either of two desires.

IO

Tell me the twain, and let me choose.

PROMETHEUS

'Tis done ; choose whether I tell thee plainly of thy coming tribulations or of him who is to deliver me.

CHORUS

Yet rather bestow the one favor on her and

the other on me, and be not chary of your words. To her set forth her future wanderings, and to me your deliverer, as I long to hear.

PROMETHEUS

Your eagerness compels me, and I will relate all you ask. To you first, Io, I will proclaim trials of wandering, and do you record them on the tablets of your brain.— When you have crossed the tide that bounds two continents, then toward the flaming sun-trodden regions of the dawn pass on beyond the surge of the sea till you reach the Gorgonean plains of Cisthene, the home of the Graeae, the three daughters of Phoreys, ancient virgins, possessing among them but one eye and one tooth, upon whom neither the sun looks down with his beams, nor ever the moon by night. And near by are the three other sisters, the winged, snake-haired, man-hating Gorgons, upon whom no mortal may look and live. Such wardens guard that land. Yet hear another spectacle of dread: beware the sharp-beaked hounds of Zeus that never bark, the griffins, and beware the one-eyed Arimaspians, hosts of riders who dwell by the gold-washing tide of Pluto's stream; approach them not. And you will come to a far-off land, a swarthy people, who

live by the fountain of the sun and Aethiopia's river. Follow its banks until you arrive at the Cataract where from the Bybline hills the Nile pours out its waters sweet and unadulterate. This stream will guide you to the great Nilotic delta, where at the last fate bids you and your children, Io, establish your far-off home. Now if my speech seems stammering and hard to understand, still question me and be advised; for there is more leisure to me than I could wish.

CHORUS

If anything remains untold of her life of weary wanderings, now recount it to her; but if all is said, then grant us the favor we beg. You have not forgotten it.

PROMETHEUS

She has heard her journeyings to the end; yet that she know my words are not spoken in vain, I will relate her toils before coming hither, and this shall be a witness to the truth of my prophecy. I will pass over the greater part of the tale, and come to the end of your wanderings. For thus you came at last to the Molossion plains and Dodona with its lofty ridges, where is the oracle and home of Thesprotian

Zeus and that strange portent of the talking oaks which in language clear and void of riddles addressed you as the renowned future spouse of Zeus, and the memory of this must still speak in your breast. From thence, urged on by frenzy, you rushed by the sea-shore path to the great gulf of Rhea, and back returned like a vessel tempest-tost from port. Now no longer the gulf shall be known by its old name, but shall be called the Ionian Sea, as a memorial to all men of your journeying. This knowledge is a sign to you of my understanding, that it discerns more than meets the eye. — The rest I tell to you, daughters of Oceanus, and to her together, returning again to the track of my former tale. There is a city, Canôbus, standing on the verge of the land at the very mouth and silted bar of the Nile, where at the last Zeus shall restore you to your mind with but the stroke and gentle touching of his hand. There you shall bear a child to Zeus, the swarthy Epaphus, “Touch-born,” who shall gather as lord the fruit of all the valley of the broad-flowing Nile. The fourth generation after him, a band of fifty sisters shall return perforce to Argos, to flee the courtship of their fifty cousins. And these, like hawks that follow hard upon a flock of doves, shall pursue the maidens,

seeking marriage ill to seek, for God shall grudge them the sweet pleasure of that love. In the Pelasgian land the maidens shall find a home, when in the watches of the night with deed of murderous revenge they, women as they are, have slain their suitors, each plunging her deadly blade into her new lord's throat — so might the Queen of Love appear to my foes! Yet longing shall soothe one maiden's heart to spare her fellow, and blunt the edge of her resolve, for of the twain it will please her rather to be called timid than bloodthirsty. And from her a royal race shall spring in Argos — time fails to tell the whole — and a mighty man of valor, renowned with the bow, who shall deliver me from these toils. All this my ancient mother, the Titan Themis, foretold to me in an oracle; but how it shall come to pass needs yet many words to relate, and the hearing would profit you nothing.

10

Eleleu! eleleu!

Once more the spasm, the madness
Smiteth my brain as a fire.

I am stung by the pest, I am pierced
With a dart never forged in the fire;
My seated heart at my ribs

Doth knock, and my straining eyes
Revolve in their orbs ; I am borne
As a vessel is lashed by the tempest ;
My tongue hath broke its control,
And my turbid words beat madly
In billows of horror and woe.

[*Exit Io.*

Third Stasimon

CHORUS

Wise among mortals I count him
Who weighed this truth in his mind
And divulged it : better the union
Of equal with equal in wedlock.
How shall the toiler, the craftsman,
Be lifted in idle desire
To mate with the glory of wealth
Or the honor of noble descent ?

Never, O kindly powers,
Behold me the partner of Zeus ;
Never may one of the gods
Descend from the skies for my love.
Horror sufficient I feel
For Io, the virgin, the outcast,
Who hateth her lord and is driven
By Hera to wander forlorn.

Wedlock if equal I fear not ;
But oh ! may never a god
With love's irresistible glance
Constrain me ! Hard were the battle,
For who were I to resist him ?
What way of escape would remain
From the counsel and purpose of Zeus ?

Exodus

PROMETHEUS

Yet shall Zeus himself, the stubborn of soul, be humbled, for the union he purposes in his heart shall hurl him to outer darkness from his throne of supremacy. Then at last the curse of his father Cronos shall be fulfilled to the uttermost, the curse that he swore when thrown from his ancient seat. All this I know and how the curse shall work, and I only of the gods may point out a refuge from these disasters. Therefore let him sit boldly now, trusting in his thunders that reverberate through the sky, and wielding fiery darts in his hands ; they shall avail him naught nor save him from falling in ruin unendurable. A mighty wrestler he is preparing against himself, an irresistible champion, who shall search out a fire more terrible than

his lightning and a roaring noise to drown his thunder, and who shall break in pieces that sea-scourge and shaker of the earth, the trident-spear of Poseidon. And Zeus, broken on this rock, shall learn how far apart it is to rule and be a slave.

CHORUS

Thy bodings against Zeus are but thy own desire.

PROMETHEUS

I speak what is to be, and that is my desire.

CHORUS

Must we look for one to reign above Zeus?

PROMETHEUS

Troubles more grievous to bear shall bow his neck.

CHORUS

Thou tremblest not to utter such words?

PROMETHEUS

Why should I tremble whose fate is not to die?

CHORUS

Yet he might still harder torments inflict.

PROMETHEUS

So let him ; I am prepared for all.

CHORUS

Yet the wise bow down to Nemesis.

PROMETHEUS

So worship, flatter, adore the ruler of the day ; but I have no thought in my heart for Zeus. Let him act, let him reign his little while as he will ; for he shall not long rule over the gods. — (*Enter HERMES.*) But I see here the lackey of Zeus, the servant of the new tyrant. No doubt he has come with tidings of some new device.

HERMES

Thee, the wise, the bitter beyond bitterness, the thief of fire, who hast revolted against the gods and betrayed their honors to thy creatures of a day, — to thee I speak. The father bids thee declare the chance of wedlock thou vauntest, that shall bereave him of his sceptre ; and this thou art to state clearly and not involve thy speech in riddles. Put me not, O Prometheus, to double my journey ; thou seest that Zeus is not appeased by dubious words.

PROMETHEUS

Haughty thy speech and swollen with pride,
as becomes a servant of the gods. Ye are but
young in tyranny, and think to inhabit a citadel
unassaulted of grief; yet have I not seen two
tyrants fall therefrom? And third I shall be-
hold this present lord cast down in utter ruin.
Do I seem to cower and quail before these new
gods? Hardly, I think; there is no fear in me.
But do you trudge back the road you came;
for all your pains of asking are in vain.

HERMES

Yet forget not such insolence has brought
you to this pass of evil.

PROMETHEUS

Be assured I would not barter my hard lot
for your menial service.

HERMES

It is better no doubt to serve this rock than
to be the trusted herald of Zeus.

PROMETHEUS

I but answered insult with insult.

HERMES

You seem to glory in your present state.

PROMETHEUS

What, I? So might I see my enemies glory,
—and you among them!

HERMES

You blame me too for your calamities?

PROMETHEUS

In simple sooth I count all the gods my foes,
who requited my benefits with injuries.

HERMES

Your madness I see is a deep-rooted disease.

PROMETHEUS

If hatred of foes is madness, I am mad.

HERMES

Who could endure you in prosperity!

PROMETHEUS

Alas, prosperity!

HERMES

Zeus has not learned that cry, alas.

PROMETHEUS

Time, growing ever older, teaches all things.

HERMES

It has not taught you wisdom yet.

PROMETHEUS

Else I should hardly talk with you, a slave.

HERMES

It seems you will not answer the father's demands.

PROMETHEUS

My debt of gratitude I fain would pay.

HERMES

You have reviled and scorned me as a child.

PROMETHEUS

And are you not simpler than a child if you hope to learn aught from me? There is no torment or contrivance in the power of Zeus to wring this utterance from me, except these bonds are loosened. Therefore let him hurl upon me the red levin, let him confound the reeling world with tempest of white-feathered snow and subterranean thunders; none of these

things shall extort from me the knowledge that may ward off his overthrow.

HERMES

Consider if you shall profit by this.

PROMETHEUS

I have considered long since and formed my plan.

HERMES

Yet subdue thyself in time, rash fool, to regard thy present ills in wisdom.

PROMETHEUS

You vex me to no purpose, as one might waste his words on a wave of the sea. Dream not that ever in fear of Zeus's will I shall grow woman-hearted, and raise my supine hands in supplication to my hated foe for deliverance from these bonds; — it is not in my nature.

HERMES

Though I speak much, my words will all be wasted; my appeals have no power to soften and appease your heart, but champing the bit like a new-yoked colt you are restive and struggle against the reins. There is no strength of wis-

dom in your savage mood, for mere self-will in a foolish man avails nothing. And consider, if thou disregard my words, what a tempest of evils, wave on wave inevitable, shall break upon thee; for first the father will smite this rugged cliff with rending of thunder and hurtling fires, and in its harsh and rock-ribbed embrace enfold thy hidden body. Then after a weary age of years once more thou shalt come forth to the light; and the winged hound of Zeus, the ravening eagle, with savage greed shall tear the mighty ruin of thy limbs, feasting all day an uninvited guest, and glutting his maw on thy black-gnawed liver. Neither look for any respite from this agony, unless some god shall appear as a voluntary successor to thy toils, and of his own free will goeth down to sunless Hades and the dark depths of Tartarus. Therefore take heed; for my words are not vain boasting, but all too truly spoken. The lips of Zeus know not to utter falsehood, but all that he saith he will accomplish. Do thou consider and reflect, and regard not vaunting pride as better than wise counsel.

CHORUS

To us Hermes seems to utter words not un-

timely; for he admonishes you to abandon vaunting pride and seek for wise counsel. Obey him; it is shameful for a wise man to go astray.

PROMETHEUS

All this ere he uttered his message
I knew; yet feel no dishonor
In suffering wrong from a foe.
Ay, let the lightning be launched
With curled and forkèd flame
On my head; let the air confounded
Shudder with thunderous peals
And convulsion of raging winds;
Let tempests beat on the earth
Till her rooted foundations tremble;
The boisterous surge of the sea
Leap up to mingle its crest
With the stars eclipsed in their orbs;
Let the whirling blasts of Necessity
Seize on my body and hurl it
Down to the darkness of Tartarus, —
Yet all he shall not destroy me!

HERMES

I hear the delirious cries
Of a mind unhinged; his prayer
Is frenzy, and all that he doth. —

But ye who condole with his anguish,
 Be quick, I implore, and depart,
 Ere the deafening roar of the thunder
 Daze and bewilder your senses.

CHORUS

Waste not thy breath in vain warnings,
 Nor utter a word unendurable ;
 For who art thou in the pathway
 Of evil and falsehood to guide me ?
 Better I deem it to suffer
 Whate'er he endures ; for traitors
 My soul abhorreth, their shame
 I spew from my heart as a pest.

HERMES

Yet remember my counsel in season,
 And blame not your fortune when caught
 In the snare of Disaster, nor cry
 Unto Zeus that he throws you unwarned
 Into sorrow. Yourselves take the blame ;
 Foretaught and with eyes unveiled
 You walk to be snared in the vast
 And implicate net of Disaster.

[*Exit HERMES. A storm bursts, with thunder and lightning. The rocks are sundered ; PROMETHEUS slowly sinks from sight, while the CHORUS scatters to right and left.*

PROMETHEUS

Lo, in grim earnest the world
Is shaken, the roar of thunders
Reverberates, gleams the red levin,
And whirlwinds lick up the dust.
All the blasts of the winds leap out
And meet in tumultuous conflict,
Confounding the sea and the heavens.
'T is Zeus who driveth his furies
To smite me with terror and madness.
O mother Earth all-honored,
O Air revolving thy light
A common boon unto all,
Behold what wrongs I endure.

NOTES.



NOTES

Page 55, line 7.

An oft-quoted phrase : literally *Innumerable laughter of the ocean waves*. It is said that De Quincey always understood the words to refer to the sound of the waves.

Page 55, line 14.

Aeschylus follows the genealogy of Hesiod. First Uranus ruled, then his son Cronos and the Titans, including Prometheus, and lastly Zeus, the son of Cronos. The succession is often interpreted to signify the increasing orderliness and harmony in creation.

Page 58, line 5.

The coryphaeus, or leader of the chorus, often speaks in the singular, for the whole band. It is probable, however, that in this passage the whole chorus speaks, although using the singular pronoun.

Page 64, line 12.

It may be remarked as a peculiarly classic trait that Prometheus, though unbending in will, never fails to admit the humiliation of his position. Zeus has taken no "vain revenge" as in the *Prometheus Unbound* of Shelley, whose Titan is made to say :—

"Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
And moments aye divided by keen pangs
Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
Scorn and despair, — these are mine empire :—
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
From thine unenvied throne, O, Mighty God!"

Page 68, line 1.

Typho, the monstrous son of Zeus and Hera, himself the father of Cerberus and the Hydra. He attempted to dethrone Zeus, and was punished as Aeschylus relates. The description of Aetna sending forth rivers of fire is taken from an actual eruption of that volcano which occurred while Aeschylus was in Sicily.

Page 75, line 4.

The craft of the forger, i. e., the work of Hephaestus in binding him.

Page 82, line 8.

Inachus, the father of Io, was the god of the river of that name in Argos, and the son of Oceanus ; hence the brother of the Oceanides.

Page 82, line 5 from bottom.

The story of Io is too well known to require repetition :— how she was loved of Zeus, who transformed her into a heifer to escape the jealous eye of Hera ; how the latter claimed the heifer and sent the unsleeping Argus to keep watch over her ; how Hermes at the command of Zeus slew Argus ; how by means of a gadfly Hera drove the heifer from land to land ; and how at last in Egypt the touch of Zeus restored to her proper form Io, who became the mother of Epaphus, the ancestor of Heracles. The wanderings of Io, as related by Prometheus, belong to a semi-fabulous world which no amount of ingenuity can reconcile with actual geography.

Page 89, last line.

This refers to Heracles, not to be confused with the threatened child of Zeus and Thetis, who, if born, was to supplant his father.

Page 92, lines 2, 3 from bottom.

The flight of these maidens to Argos is the theme of the *Suppliants* of Aeschylus. — Aegyptus and Danaus are descendants of Io ; the former has fifty sons, the latter fifty daughters. Discord breaks out between the two brothers, and Danaus, with his daughters, flees to Argos. The fifty sons of Aegyptus pursue the maidens. Danaus pretends to favor their suit, but meditates terrible vengeance. To each of his daughters he gives a dagger with command to slay her husband during the marriage night. All obey, except Hypermnestra, who takes pity on her husband, Lynceus, and flees with him.

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